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Nottingham City of Football:

Survey of School Pupils Across Nottingham –
January 2017



Reader Information

This report was prepared by Stephen Zwolinsky and Professor Jim McKenna.

Report Reference:

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Executive Summary

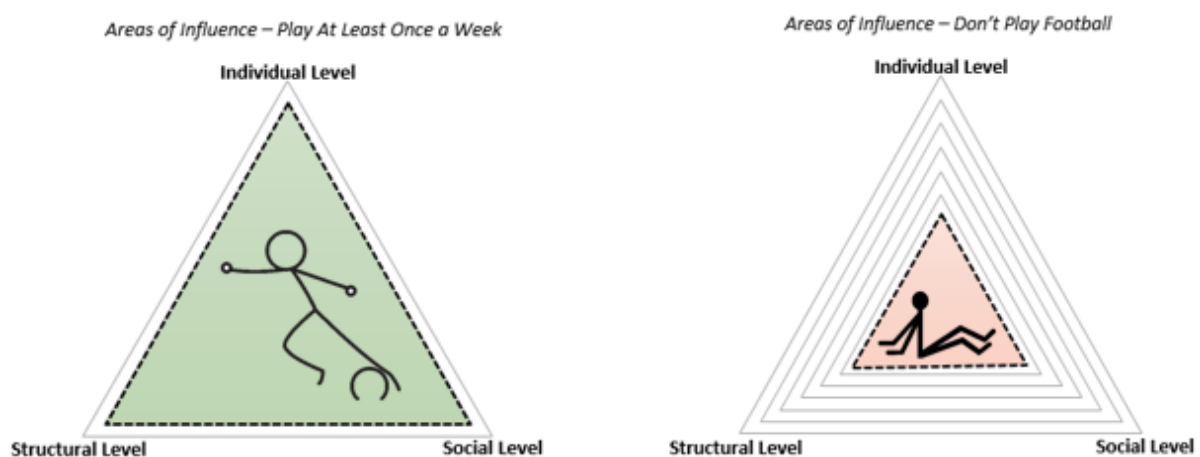
INTRODUCTION: This report provides an overview of school pupil's experiences of football. To be effective with 'new' audiences, interventions need to be planned to address the multiple barriers non-engagers may experience in attempting to become involved. Typically these barriers revolve around motivation and competencies in three domains; individual, social and structural, giving a 2 x 3 framework. City of Football is attempting to engage more people, especially inactive young people and girls, into football-related activity. This report addresses progress to-date around this framework.

METHOD: A brief three part survey that centred on experiences of football was completed by N=594 children in years 4 to 11 from schools in three areas of Nottingham and at Gamecity. Firstly, pupils self-reported the frequency with which they played football inside and outside school on a five-point scale. Second, pupils were asked a series of questions to determine their social networks around football. These revolved around who they spoke to about football and how close they were to that person. The final element of the survey was a 12-item questionnaire to assess perspectives on motivation and competencies across the three behavioural domains. Each question was scored from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). High scores indicated strong coverage of a theme.

RESULTS: There was a broadly even gender split across the sample. Primary school pupils accounted for two thirds of the sample (68.5%, n=348) with year 5 being the best represented year group (56%, n=313). Overall, around 40% of pupils reported playing football at least once a week and around 30% did not play football. However, over 56% of boys played football at least once a week compared to only 22% of girls. Moreover, pupils in primary schools reported higher levels of engagement with football inside and outside school compared to those pupils in secondary schools. In addition, pupils reporting social networks were around 30% more likely to play football at least once a week compared to those pupils without a footballing social network. Furthermore, 72% of boys reported a footballing social network compared to 49% of girls and 33% more pupils in primary schools report a social network around football compared to secondary school pupils.

Regarding motivation and competencies across the three behavioural domains, data suggested the overall pupil experience of football could be markedly improved. Footballing

networks were dominated by boys who predominantly networked with boys they were ‘close’ to. Girl’s footballing networks were less ‘close’ and still heavily influenced by boys. Therefore, girls lacking social motivation and competencies are likely to find the task of engaging positively with football more challenging compared to boys. Pupil’s experiences were significantly shaped by their social networks, gender and school year. The largest differences in motivation and competencies were found for pupils who played football regularly compared to those who didn’t – City of Football’s intended target audience. This is graphically represented below. For optimal football experiences, pupil scores (the shaded area) should extend to the edge of the triangle for each domain, as it does for those pupils who regularly play football. For children who don’t play football, it appears that wholesale change is needed.



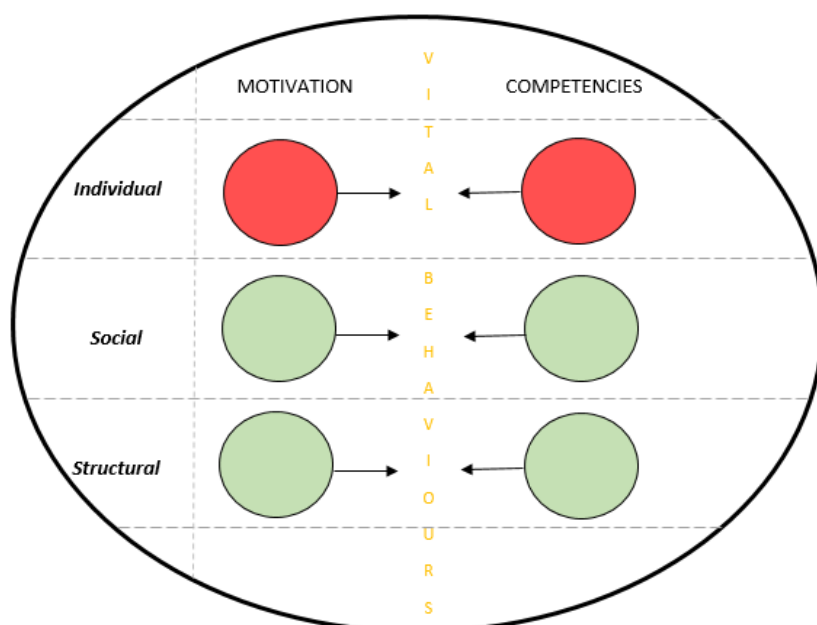
SUMMARY: Football has traditionally engaged active young boys who have interest in football and the ability to play the game. However, the focus of City of Football is on increasing engagement in non-traditional playing groups. This report shows some of the key ingredients that determine childrens engagement. These data suggest that while football’s traditional audience has the necessary motivation and competencies to engage the game, many children are missing vital parts of the jigsaw across the behavioural domains to fit in to the existing football system. Interventions need to do more to motivate and upskill those children who are currently turned off by more traditional offers. Further, social elements are likely to have a dramatic consequence on engagement. What is more, it appears that there aren’t the same footballing social networks available for most girls, which is likely stifling their involvement. To be successful with this new target audience, football must move away from being dominated by the personal competence and passion of ‘football people’ for recruiting their ‘non-football’ counterparts.

1: Introduction

Despite the well-established benefits of being active and playing sport, current levels of engagement among children – especially girls – are low. Children often face considerable barriers when attempting to engage interventions like ‘Nottingham City of Football’ (NCoF). Many behavioural factors are likely to influence this engagement, therefore understanding children’s motivations and competencies across these factors is paramount. Personal experience of success and failure influence expectations of future engagement. These experiences are often shaped by factors external to the individual.

Effective interventions need to build and support a system that develops positive emotions and resilient children. In essence, behaviour has three layers of influence, (i) Individual, (ii) Social and (iii) Structural. We can influence behaviour by changing motivation and competency across these structural aspects - leaving six areas of influence. The key here is to clarify measurable results, find preferred approaches, and analyse the six sources of influence. Most change efforts are unsuccessful because they don’t focus on the vital behaviours or identify crucial moments when the right choices matter. Moreover, while each area of influence is important one shouldn’t be championed at the expense of another.

Figure 1: The Six Sources of Influence



2: Methodology

This section summarises the methodology employed for this piece of work and sits within the overall programme evaluation. NCoF aims to increase football participation among groups that don't traditionally engage in new and interesting ways. The program seeks to make engaging with football a normative behaviour across the city, especially with inactive children and specifically girls. This piece of work aims to answer the following research questions from school pupils across the city:

1. *How frequently do the pupils play football inside and outside school?*
2. *What are the pupils social networks around football like?*
3. *How do the pupils areas of influence differ?*

Data Capture: Following clearance from the Leeds Beckett University research ethics committee and consent from participating head teachers, pupils were invited to engage the research in December 2016. Prior to formally engaging the research process, pupils were required to read an information sheet and provide informed consent. Data were captured at participating sites through a brief 2 page survey about football. The data were collected from schools in three areas of Nottingham (Sneinton, Rushcliffe & St Ann's) and Gamecity.

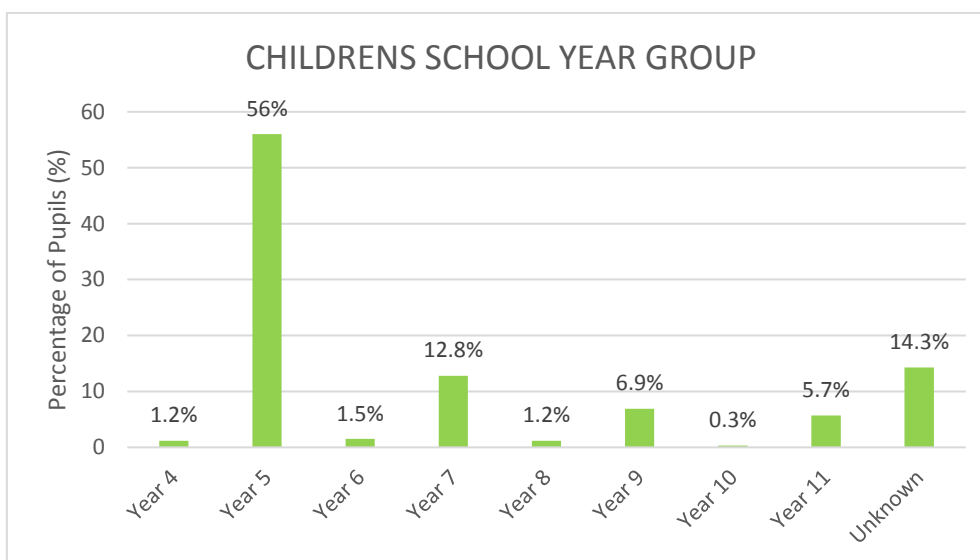
Data Analysis: To help address the research questions, pupils were asked to report the frequency with which they played football inside and outside school on a five point scale. In addition, pupils were asked a series of questions to determine their social networks around football. These revolved around who they spoke to about football and how close they were to that person. The final element of the survey was a 12-item questionnaire to assess pupil's perspectives on motivation and competencies across the three behavioural domains outlined in the introduction. Two questions for each area. Each question was scored from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Items were worded positively meaning that high scores indicated strong coverage of a theme. Scores were summed to provide an overall score (out of 60). Composite scores were also calculated at the individual, social and structural level.

Survey data were cleaned and inputted into the statistical software package SPSS (v21) for analysis. Percentages were calculated from the total number of valid answers given for a question. In addition to generating descriptive statistics, inferential analyses were conducted (where appropriate) to explore the relationship between variables of interest.

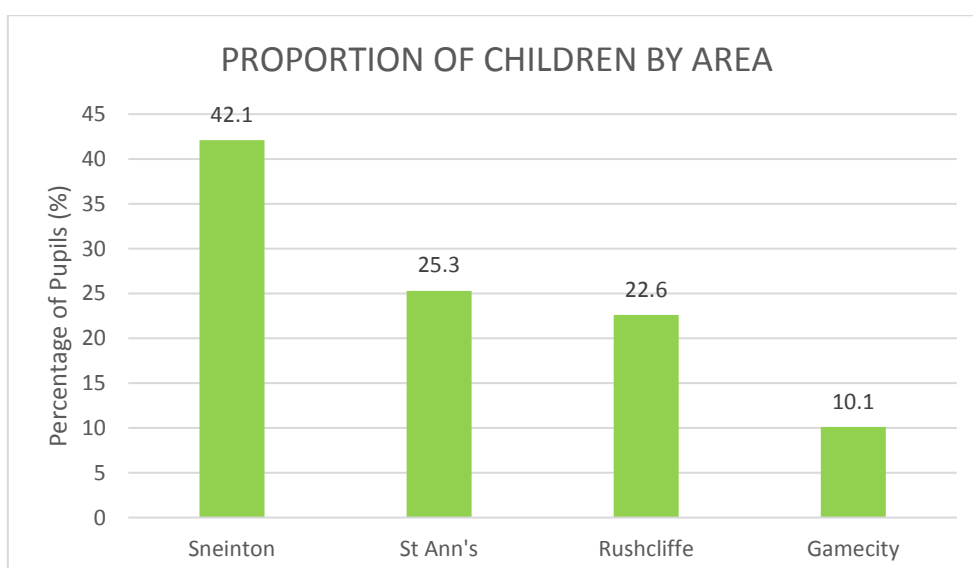
3: Results

3.i Demographics of the Respondents:

In total n=594 children completed the brief survey within schools and at Gamecity to provide valid data. The gender split was almost even, 52.9% (n=313) were boys, 44.4% (n=264) were girls and 2.5% (n=15) did not provide data on gender. The vast majority of pupils, 56% (n=332) were in year 5 and the next largest year group was year 7 which only accounted for 12.8% (n=76) of pupils. Primary school pupils (68.5%, n=348) represented the majority of the sample.



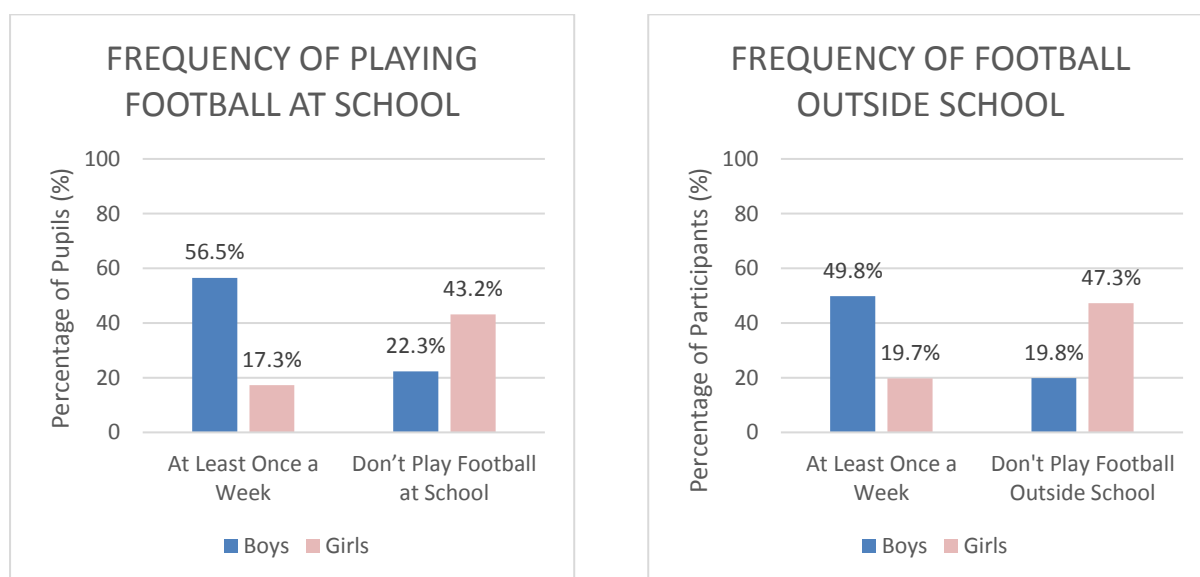
The surveys were completed in four main areas across Nottingham. There were 42.1% (n=250) of surveys collected at schools in Sneinton, 25.3% (n=150) at schools in St Ann's, 22.6% (n=134) at schools in Rushcliffe and 10.1% (n=60) at 'Gamecity'.



3.ii Pupils Engagement with Football:

Children were asked to report the frequency with which they played football inside and outside of school. Valid data was provided by n=592 children. Overall, the largest proportions of children, 40.9% (n=242), reported that they played football at least once a week at school, and 36.5% (n=216) played at least once a week outside school. The next largest group included children who didn't play football at all. In total, 29.1% (n=172) reported that they didn't play football at school and 32.6% (n=193) reported that they didn't play football outside school.

When this data was disaggregated by gender, a different picture emerged. Boys reported far greater engagement with football compared to girls. All told, 56.5% of boys played football at least once a week at school compared to only 22.3% of girls, and 17.3% of boys don't play football at school compared to 43.2% of girls. Moreover, of the n= 167 children who played football at least once a week inside and outside school, 79.6% (n=133) were boys. Conversely, of the n= 108 children who didn't play football, 72.2% (n=78) were girls.

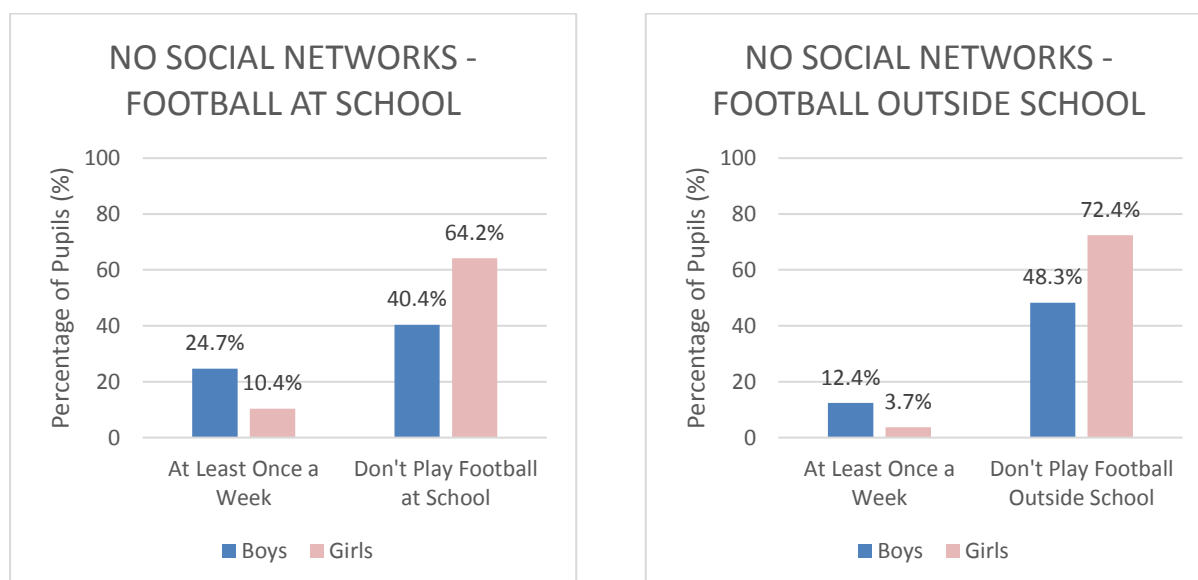


Pupils in primary schools also reported higher levels of engagement with football inside and outside school compared to those pupils in secondary schools. When broken down by gender boys showed far higher levels of engagement compared to girls. Moreover, the proportion of boys who played football once a week dropped from around 60% in primary school to around 47% in secondary school. Among girls, overall around 26% played football at least once a week in primary school, however this figure halved to 12% in secondary school girls.

3.iii Pupils Football Networks:

Valid data were provided by n=592 pupils. When asked if they talked to anyone about football, 60% (n=355) reported a social network and the remaining 40% (n=237) did not talk to any of their friends about football. Of the n=355 pupils who talked to their friends about football, 56.3% (n=200) played football at least once a week at school and 54.4% played at least once a week outside school. Only 13% (n=46) of pupils who talked about football with their friends did not play football inside or outside of school. Having a social network around football appeared to be correlated with higher levels of engagement.

Regarding gender and networks, 71.6% (n=224) of boys reported talking to their friends about football compared to 49.2% (n=130) of girls. Around two thirds of boys and one third of girls who talked about football reported playing at least once a week inside and outside school. Among pupils who didn't talk about football, 24.7% of boys played football at least once a week at school and 12.4% played at least once a week outside school compared to 10.4% and 3.7% of girls. Children without footballing networks reported the lowest engagement, this was even more marked for girls, especially when looking at engagement outside of school. Moreover, networks around football were dominated by boys. While boys predominantly talked to boys about football, girls tended to talk to boys as frequently as girls about football.

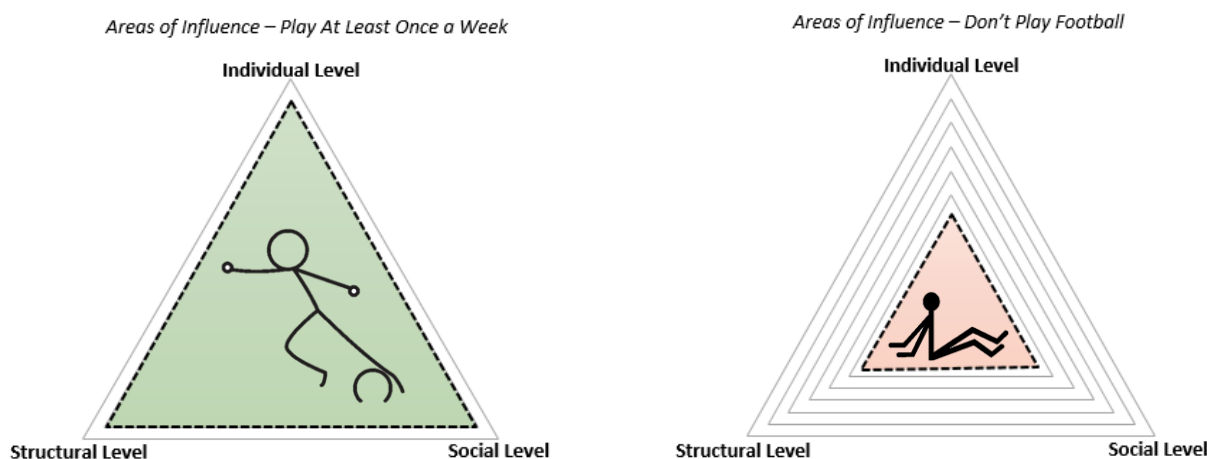


Social networks around football were more pronounced in primary schools compared to secondary schools. For example, 73.8% of primary school pupils talked about football compared to only 40.6% of secondary school pupils.

3.iv Overall Sources of Influence for Football:

Valid data for the sources of influence were provided by $n=567$ pupils. Overall the average score was 40.8 out of 60 for pupils providing data. At the individual level the average score was 13.8 out of 20, at the social level it was 13.3 and at the structural level it was 13.7. These results suggest a rounded profile of influence for pupils' football experiences. Nevertheless, it also suggests that across the board there is potential to improve these pupils' footballing experiences by about a third. Moreover, there were statistically significant differences in total scores between pupils who had social networks (47.5) around football compared to those who didn't (31.1) $t [565] = -17.747, p < .000$, between boys (44.9) and girls (35.8) $t [554] = 8.616, p < .000$ and between primary (42.7) and secondary (38.6) school pupils $t [494] = 3.417, p < .005$.

The largest difference in total score for the sources of influence was found among pupils who played football at least once a week inside and outside school (53.7) compared to those pupils who did not play football inside or outside school (25.8) $t [262] = 29.154, p < .000$. This is graphically represented in the figures below. For an optimal football experience, the shaded area should extend to the edge of the triangle for each domain.



These data suggest that pupils who play football, especially primary school boys with social networks around football, have developed the motivation and necessary competencies at an individual, social and structural level to have positive experiences of football. Conversely, people who don't play football, especially secondary school girls with no footballing social networks, appear to lack the necessary interest and perceived ability. This grouping of pupils are the ones most in need of intervention to help enhance their areas of influence if they are ever to be reached and sustain engagement with programmes like NCoF.

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2. Moore GF, Audrey S, Barker M, Bond L, Bonell C, Hardeman W, et al. Process evaluation of complex interventions: Medical Research Council guidance. BMJ (Clinical research ed). 2015;350:h1258.